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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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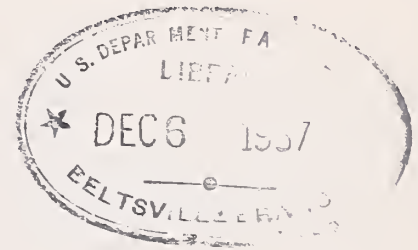
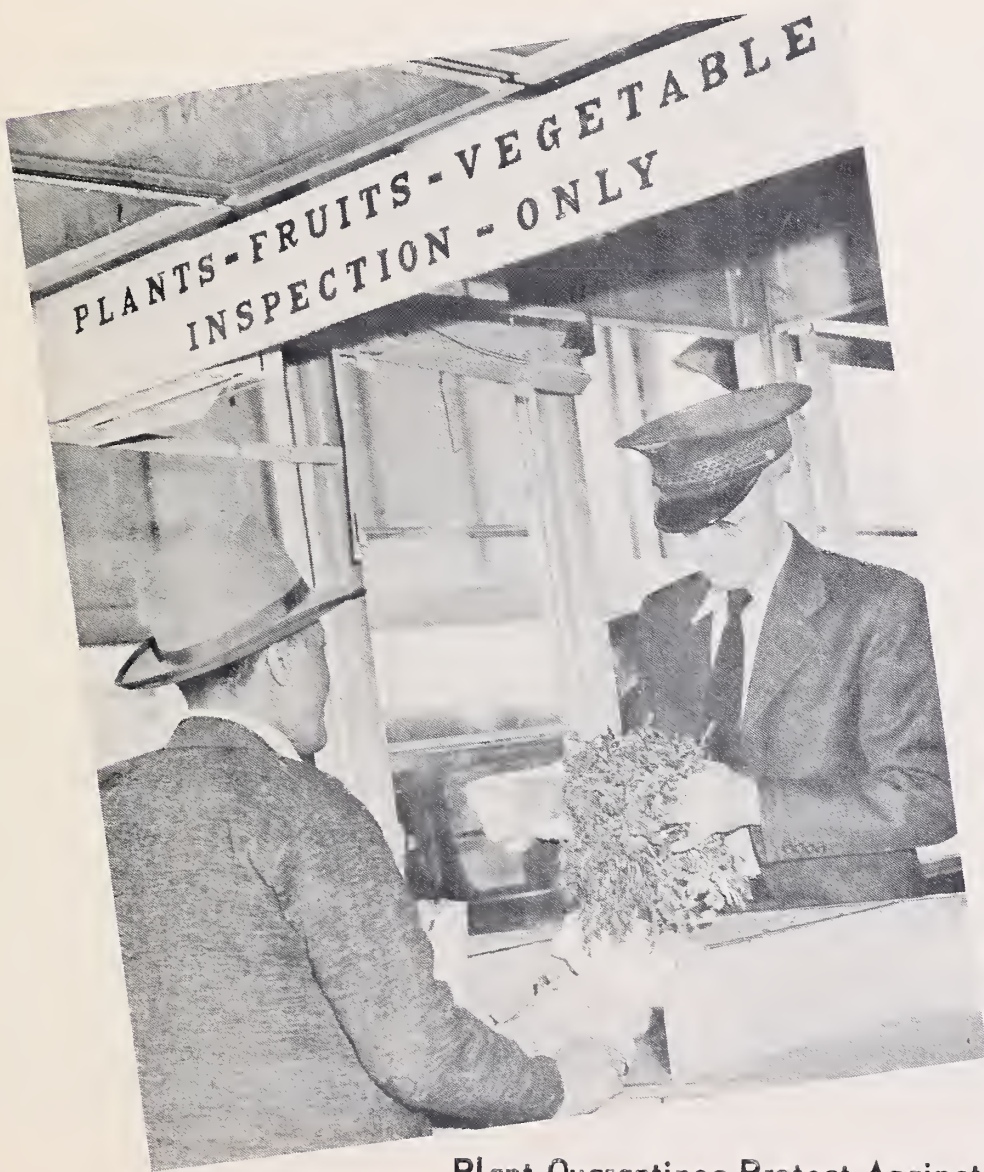
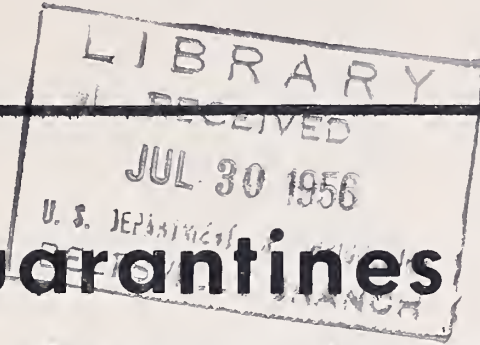
Picture Story No. 98

July 1956



Plant Quarantines

Protect Against Alien Plant Pests



N - 10609

At this border plant quarantine station baggage and parcels of persons coming to the United States from Mexico are carefully examined for prohibited plants and plant materials. Strict quarantines are enforced against fruit which may bring in destructive fruit flies and against seed cotton that may carry pink bollworms. Infested material is frequently found in the bundles of the large number of Mexican workers who cross our border seasonally.

Plant Quarantines Protect Against Alien Plant Pests

As fast transport shrinks distances between this country and the far places of the world, and as international travel and trade continue to expand, the danger of entry into the United States of destructive foreign plant pests increases.

Keeping out plant pest immigrants - - known and unknown - - is the job of the Plant Quarantine

Branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Highly trained inspectors are stationed at border, sea, and airports to carry out the provisions of the plant quarantine laws. They inspect airplanes, steamships, trains, and automobiles, and examine cargo, stores, baggage, and mail for plant materials and foods that might conceal the dangerous stowaways.

(Story continued on back page)



5604

On the customs line of a transatlantic pier, plant quarantine inspector picks up undeclared fruit in baggage of a passenger arriving from Spain en route to California. Such contraband fruit is often infested with the Mediterranean fruit fly, particularly destructive to citrus fruit. Baggage has been found the source of a great quantity of unauthorized plant material that could bring destructive pests to this country.



N - 16803

Fresh fruit and vegetables in stores of passenger and cargo planes arriving from foreign ports are subject to plant quarantine disposition to prevent entry of plant pests. Similar action is taken with ships' stores.



N - 16810

Plant quarantine inspectors cut open and examine a small percent of imported garlic, chestnuts, or other plant foods arriving here seasonally in large cargoes. The inspection is made to be sure that the shipment is free of insects or diseases. If any living pests are found in the shipment, treatment may be required as a condition of entry; if no effective treatment is known, the shipment will be denied entry.



N - 16836

Plant quarantine inspector finds many stored jackets in one of the many supported material open for inspection. Customs Appraiser's Stores in jackets may harbor destructive insects.



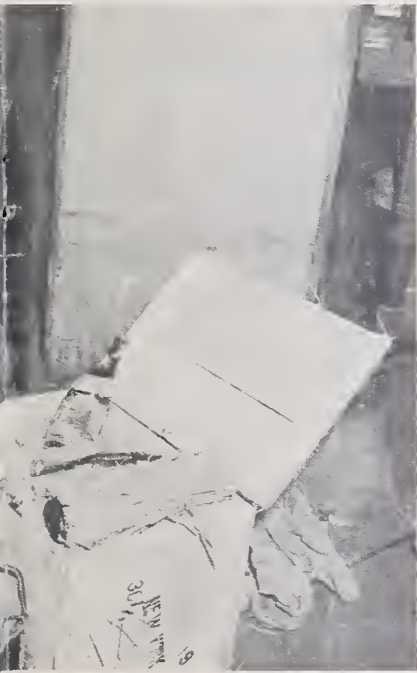
N - 5453

Foreign mail and parcel post packages may bring destructive plant pests into this country. Here inspector finds cotton infested with live pink bollworms used in packing a wooden jewel box sent through the mail. Postal authorities and customs officers work with plant quarantine inspectors in helping to detect restricted plant material coming through the mails.



N - 16813

Nursery stock, seeds, and cuttings from foreign countries are routed through a plant inspection house for special examination and treatment. Here inspector places plants in a fumigation chamber for treatment with methyl bromide gas. Hot water, dry heat, chemical spray or dip, are other treatments used.



Inspector finds prohibited straw in many sample cases of imported material for inspection at the U. S. Quarantine Station in New York. Straw is a common carrier of destructive diseases and in-



N - 16821

Laboratory examinations and tests are made of imported plant material to detect and identify insects or diseases that may be present. All important pest findings are recorded since they will determine conditions for entry and may show need for future quarantine action.

Some 17,500 lots of destructive plant pests - - - 11,600 insects and 5,900 diseases - - from throughout the world were intercepted by plant quarantine inspectors during the past year. In this same year inspectors examined 54,700 vessels and 97,000 planes from overseas, and over 17,000,000 motor vehicles, 101,000 freight cars, and 2,200 pullmans and coaches arriving from below our southern border. Unusual traffic loads often complicate the inspection task. For example, last year at one airport alone - - Idlewild, N.Y. - - - the inspection staff was faced with an average of 50 transatlantic plane arrivals daily during the peak month of July

The Mediterranean fruit fly, always a potential threat to our important fruit industries in Southern and Western States, is Public Plant Enemy No. 1 for plant quarantine inspectors. Since its iradication in 1930, no infestation by this insect pest had been reported in the United States until recent months, when it was found in Florida. This is only the second time this pest has successfully invaded the country. Yet on literally hundreds of occasions -- almost 2,000 times in the last 40 years -- Medfly invaders have been intercepted by plant quarantine inspectors before they could cross our borders. Through prompt and vigorous domestic quarantine and control action, pest-control agencies hope to eradicate the present infestation before it can spread to commercial citrus and other fruit areas.

The Khapra beetle, native of the Far East and considered the world's worst pest of stored grain, is another marauder high on the plant quarantine black list. It has been found in California, Arizona, and New Mexico, and tight quarantine regulations are enforced to prevent further invasion and spread.

Special precautions are also in effect against the golden nematode, a soil-borne organism that is destructive to potatoes and tomatoes.

These are only a few of the many known insect and nematode pests that plant quarantine inspectors are trained to detect. They must also be on the alert for a variety of destructive fungal, bacterial, and viral diseases of plants. Frequently they discover new species of pests and detect pests arriv-

ing from countries in which they were not previously reported.

Commercial shipments of plants and plant materials are relatively simple for quarantine inspectors to control. Much of this material is certified by the country of origin as meeting sanitary growing and packing conditions. Nevertheless, inspectors examine each shipment to insure that it is free from pests and that no contaminating soil or prohibited packing material or other commodity is present. Fumigation with gas and treatment with heat or cold as a condition of entry are other safeguards used for certain types of plant material. Inspection and clearance of bulbs at the point of origin in Holland, Belgium, and France continues to prove an effective way of getting cleaner and healthier bulbs to our gardeners at less inspection cost to the taxpayer.

A variety of dangerous plant pests may be brought in with baggage of ships' and airplane passengers or crews or with shipments of gifts by mail or otherwise. Detecting these unauthorized arrivals greatly taxes the ingenuity of inspectors. Coming from the gardens and farms of people all over the world, such plant material is usually grown and harvested by laymen without knowledge of the harmful pests it may harbor. People sometimes use devious ways to get restricted material into this country without detection. Custom officers cooperate with plant quarantine inspectors in helping to keep out contraband plant materials and foods.

Plant pests could slip in with stores and furnishings of ships and planes from foreign points. These are closely watched. Military equipment and materials and baggage of personnel moved here from posts overseas are also subject to plant quarantine inspection.

Without the vital protection given by our plant quarantine inspectors, losses from plant pests, now running over \$4 billion annually, would be substantially greater. Occasionally, serious plant pests do get past the inspection line - - - but many more are kept out by the plant inspectors' vigilance at our ports and borders.

Glossy photographs, 8" x 10", of this series are free to newspapers and magazines on request to the Photography Division, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C. Please mention negative number of the photograph when requesting prints.